IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 08/04/2004

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE M.KARPAGAVINAYAGAM

CRL O.P.No.28886 OF 2003

1. Rajendran
2. Madhiyazhagi
3. Kumar
4. Udayakumar
5. Dharapathi
6. Rajasekar
7. Pazahnichaami
8. Jeyapal
9. Thamizhselvam
10.Chinnayyan
11.Arupulli
12.Azhagumalai .. Petitioners

-Vs-

The State rep. By
the Sub-Inspector of Police,
All Women Police Station,
(Crime No.7 of 2003),
Musiri Taluk, Trichy District. .. Respondent

For petitioners : Miss P.T.Asha

For respondent : Mr.V.Jayaprakash Narayanan,
Govt. Advocate.

For intervenor :M/s.V.Chandrakanthan & Srividya

Amicus Curiae : Miss R.Vaigai

Court assisted by: Mr.N.R.Chandran,
Advocate General.

:O R D E R

This case reflects the shocking episode, wherein one Suganthi, working as a Senior Telecom Office Assistant in the C.G.M.Office, Tamil Nadu Circle, Chennai, and her mother Krishnammal, a widow working as a Headmistress in an Elementary School, were directed by six persons, claiming themselves to

be Kattapanchayatdars of Valayapatti village, who imposed a fine of Rs.50,000/- upon them, for not having complied with their direction to join her husband, and made to repeatedly prostrate before them, in order to reduce the quantum of fine. Accordingly, Suganthi prostrated before the said panchayatdars from 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m. on 03.08.2003 continuously, requesting the panchayatdars to reduce the fine amount and, at last, graciously, the kattapanchayatdars reduced the fine of Rs.50,000/- and finalised the same at Rs.19,058.75 and only after collecting the same, the kattapanchayatdars released and relieved the mother Krishnammal and the daughter Suganthi.

2. On the basis of a written complaint given by Suganthi, on the orders of the Superintendent of Police, Trichy, a case was registered by the Sub-Inspector of Police, All Women Police Station, Musiri Taluk, Trichy, for the offences under Sections 498-A,342,384,385,406 506I and 149 of IPC,

against her husband, in-laws and the kattapanchayatdars. Consequently, all the persons, including kattapanchayatdars are now before this Court, seeking for anticipatory bail, apprehending arrest in the above case.

3. The history of crime is as old as mankind itself. This evil has been existing since the dawn of civilisation. The primitive society had some basic customs, which were respected by all the members of the society. Respect for customs was actuated, that any one, who violated the custom, would be punished by the God.

4. As civilisation advanced, new ideas regarding the individual rights and the duties developed and crime was no longer considered as an offence against an individual but a revolt against the whole society.

5. Soon, the State took upon itself the right to book and punish the offender. Crime began to be classified and penal laws were enacted to deal with the criminals. However, the rising crime rate had made the criminal justice system, a subject of heated debates, since the said system was unable to check the same.

6. But, what appears today to be certain is that more police, more prisons, more laws and more Courts do not achieve the object of bringing about the reform in the system of criminal justice.

7. The corollary is the lack of confidence in the criminal justice system and the consequent mushroom growth of kattapanchayats. It is painful to notice that the said kattapanchayatdars would proclaim proudly that these panchayats alone would control the crimes, as criminal justice system, monitored by the Governments, State and Central, is a total failure. This is nothing but a monstrous claim, made by the kattapanchayatdars, who take law into their own hands, challenging the law enforcing agencies.

8. One of the classic examples is the present case, which is, popularly called as Kattapanchayat case, wherein unfortunate victim Suganthi,

an Officer in the Telecom Department had to prostrate before katta panchayatdars, hoping that the fine amount of Rs.50,000/- be reduced for each prostration from 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m. on 03.08.2003. It is quite shocking to see that this inhuman incident took place in open maidan under a tree, in the presence of all the villagers, consisting of old and young and men and women, despite the existence of laws, police agencies, prison and the Courts. The preposterous explanation given by the kattapanchayatdars for the questions put by this Court, with reference to the nature of their authority for doing such an act, is their lack of knowledge about the existing provisions of laws, prohibiting the same. In short, their defence is ignorance of law. All the panchayatdars are grown up persons in the village. One of those persons is V.A.O.; another one is a Teacher and all other persons have finished their school education.

9. Let us now come to the facts in brief, to get a clear picture of this case :
(a) Krishnammal, a resident of Valayapatti village, is working as a Headmistress in an Elementary School, situated near the village. Her husband died one year ago. Her daughter Suganthi was studying B.Sc. During her studies, she got appointment in the Department of Telecommunication as a Telephone Office Assistant at Trichy. She discontinued her studies and joined the service. In the year 1991, one Rajendran, an engineering graduate married her. The said Rajendran was working as an Assistant Executive Engineer in Neyveli at that time. At the time of marriage, her widowed mother gave 25 sovereigns of jewels and Rs.50,000/- cash, apart from the household articles. Soon after the marriage, the in-laws demanded more money. Her mother was unable to give the said money, as demanded.
(b) Two years later, Suganthi delivered a male child, i.e., on 28.08 .1993. Then, the second male child was born on 25.07.1995. She got transferred from Trichy to Cuddalore. Since her husband was staying at Neyveli, she used to go to Cuddalore by bus and come back to Neyveli in the evening. The entire salary was given to her husband. Even then, her husband and her in-laws did not take care of her and the two children already born. She was treated very badly. So, she went to the extent of stopping from attending her office and stayed at Neyveli itself. Even then, the cruelty continued.

(c) Unable to bear the torture, in the year 1997, she left the matrimonial home along with the children; shifted to Cuddalore and began to attend the office at Cuddalore. Only on some occasions, husband Rajendran used to come to the house at Cuddalore and stay with them. Even then, Rajendran used to torture her all the times and threatened her that he would take away the children.

(d) In January 1999, she gave a complaint to All Women Police Station, Cuddalore, about the torture by her husband. The Police officials called him and warned him, not to abuse the wife and children and not to separate children from her custody.

(e) In March 1999, she got transferred from Cuddalore to Chennai and joined as a Senior Telecom Office Assistant in the C.G.M.Office, Tamil Nadu

Circle. From 1999, neither her husband nor her in-laws visited her house and saw her children. He did not render any help for the well-being of the children. Having felt disgusted, in March, 2002, she sent a lawyer notice to her husband, requesting his consent for divorce. There was no reply from him. Again, after three months, she sent another notice. Even for this, there was no reply. Her mother was living alone in the village Valayapatti.

(f) On 20.7.2003, she received a telephone call from her mother Krishnammal, stating that the Panchayatdars are convening a panchayat at the instance of her husband and they asked both the mother and daughter to appear before them on 03.08.2003, failing which her mother and herself will be ex-communicated from the village. Therefore, after applying for leave, leaving her children in her neighbour's house, she left Chennai and went to the village on 03.08.2003. She along with her mother Krishnammal appeared before the Panchayatdars.

(g) Mr.Rajasekar, 6th petitioner was presiding over the panchayat. The other Panchayatdars, the petitioners 7 to 12, her husband Rajendran, lst petitioner, mother-in-law Madhiyazhagi, 2nd petitioner, brothers-in-law Kumar and Udhayakumar, petitioners 3 and 4 and relative Dharapathi, 5th petitioner, were also present.

(h) During the panchayat, the Panchayatdars asked Suganthi why she sent legal notice to her husband for divorce. She explained the position. The Panchayatdars were not satisfied with the explanation. Ultimately, the Panchayatdars gave their verdict, directing Suganthi that she must live with her husband. When she expressed her inability to join her husband, the Panchayatdars, alternatively, directed her to pay Rs.50,000/- as fine, for not complying with their direction. When she said that she was not having that much of money, they said that she and her mother could prostrate before them as many times as they could and, for each prostration, the fine amount would be reduced proportionately. They also threatened both Suganthi and her mother that unless they do it, they will be ex-communicated and her mother, who is residing alone in the village, will not have any relationship with the other families in the village. Feeling apprehensive over the consequences, both of them agreed to prostrate before the Panchayatdars. Mother Krishnammal prostrated three times before the Panchayatdars. More than that, she, being an old lady, could not continue. Suganthi prostrated before the Panchayatdars from 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m. Calculating the number of times she prostrated, the Panchayatdars reduced the fine and finalised the same at Rs.19,058.75. Suganthi was directed to pay the said amount on the same day, or else, Suganthi and her mother would be tied to the temple post. Finding no other way, Suganthi collected Rs.10,000/- from her relative Ramachandran and balance amount from one Anandan, her aunt's husband, and paid the amount of Rs.1 9,058.75 to the Panchayatdars on the same day. Even then, the Kattapanchayatdars gave a further verdict, directing Suganthi to come back to the village on 10.08.2003, along with her two children, to produce before them, in order to hand over the custody of the children to her husband.

(i) Having suffered mentally and physically at the hands of mighty people, she came to Trichy, met the Superintendent of Police and presented the complaint. The same was registered in Crime No.7/2000 of All Women Police Sation, Musiri Taluk for the offences under Sections 49 8-A, 342, 384, 385,

406, 506(i) and 149 I.P.C. against 12 persons.

(j) The petitioners 1 to 5 are the husband, the mother-in-law and the brothers-in-law of Suganthi respectively and the petitioners 6 to 1 2 are the Kattapanchayatdars . Out of these petitioners, 8th petitioner Jayapal was working as the V.A.O. and 9th petitioner Tamizhselvam was working as a Teacher in a school.
(k) On coming to know of the complaint registered against them, the Panchayatdars made a written representation dated 24.8.2003 to the Collector, Trichy, and the Deputy Superintendent of Police, stating that no such panchayat was convened on 03.08.2003 and no fine was collected. However, on the direction of the Deputy Superintendent of Police, the Sub-Inspector of Police, All Women Police Station, Musiri Taluk, took up investigation and made efforts to arrest the petitioners 1 to 12. Apprehending arrest at the hands of the respondent police, all the petitioners have filed this application in Crl.O.P.No.28886 of 2003 before this Court for anticipatory bail, in respect of the case in the above crime number, registered on the complaint of Suganthi. That is how, the matter has come up before t his Court.

10. When the matter came up before this Court on 29.08.2003, this Court, on considering the seriousness of the allegations, directed the police to produce Case Diary and both the petitioners as well as the de facto complainant were asked to appear before this Court, to make a further enquiry. Accordingly, the Case Diary was produced and the de facto complainant and her mother as well as the petitioners were present before this Court.

11. Miss P.T.Asha, learned counsel for the petitioners, though would initially submit that the petitioners are entitled for grant of anticipatory bail, since the complaint given by Suganthi is a motivated one, ultimately, would admit on the instructions given by the petitioners that panchayat was held, in order to ensure unity between the husband and wife and that when there is no unity, as agreed by the de-facto complainant, petitioners 1 to 5, namely, husband, mother-inlaw, brothers-in-law and a relative obtained some amount from Suganthi towards the final settlement of the matter. On the basis of that, the amount was collected from Suganthi. The counsel would also submit that the petitioners are prepared to return the said amount to the de facto complainant.

12. When this Court made a further enquiry with the counsel and the parties, they made a statement that the acts of the Kattapanchayatdars and the collection of the fine amount, all were committed by them unknowingly and this practice of panchayat; prostration before the Panchayatdars is a regular practice; their act was bona fide and they are prepared to file affidavits, tendering apology, as they did not know that it is unlawful. Accordingly, time was granted for filing necessary affidavits. All the petitioners, on the next adjourned date, filed separate affidavits, expressing regret over the past incident and tendering unconditional apology to the court as well as to the defacto complainant Suganthi. It is specifically stated in their affidavits that the fine amount was collected as compensation only on private mediation. On the same day, the amount of Rs.19.058.75 was given back to Suganthi in the Court Hall itself. Besides tendering unconditional apology

to Suganthi through separate affidavits, each of the Panchayatdars tendered their oral apology to Suganthi and asked for pardon. However, on that day, the mother Krishnammal, who was present before the Court, represented that the threatening incident still continues. Therefore, the matter was adjourned, in order to ensure peace among the parties.

13. On coming to know about the pendency of the enquiry before this Court over the unruly act of Kattapanchayatdars through the paper publication, the public, at large, sent several letters from all over Tamil Nadu to this Court, complaining about the similar incidents, harassing the victims by the Kattapanchayatdars in various areas and requesting intervention of this Court for giving directions to the Government to pass an Ordinance, prohibiting Kattapanchayats and making Kattapanchayat, a cognizable offence. Since this Court was flooded with similar letters,depicting various sad instances, wherein the victims have suffered heavily at the hands of Kattapanchayatdars in various centres all over Tamil Nadu, this Court thought it fit to direct Advocate General, to assist the Court, in deciding the issue. Accordingly, the Advocate General appeared before this Court. He was asked to clarify about the power of this Court, to give suggestions or directions to the Government, to issue an Ordinance on this aspect. The Advocate General fairly submitted that he would immediately write to the Government regarding the same and get the view of the Government with reference to the said issue. Since hundreds and hundreds of letters have been received by this Court, quoting similar incidents being taken place in all the areas of Tamil Nadu, this Court felt that it would be appropriate to appoint an Amicus Curiae, to assist this Court, to take suitable action with reference to the grievances made by the victims in those letters and accordingly, Miss R.Vaigai was appointed as Amicus Curiae. The matter was adjourned, to enable Miss.Vaigai and the learned Advocate General, to collect other particulars to enable this Court to pass final orders in the matter.

14. In the meantime, it was brought to the notice of this Court that a press interview was published in Junior Vikatan dated 08.10.2003 , where (i)K.R.Ramasamy, M.L.A.of Thiruvadanai Constituency, (ii) Periyakaruppan of Iravucheri, Devakottai Taluk of Sivaganga District and (iii)Tamilarasan of Dharmarajapuram Village, Madurai District, gave a Press interview, opposing the move of this Court to prohibit Kattapanchayat system and criticising the functioning of this Court. Since this Court felt that giving such a statement to the Press, justifying the activities of the Kattapanchayats, thereby criticising the view of this Court, would amount to interference with the administration of justice, this Court thought it fit to get clarification from them, with regard to their statements before taking contempt action against them. Therefore, this Court directed the District Judges of Sivaganga and Madurai, to summon these three persons to the respective Courts and obtain their statements, giving clarification, with reference to their statement made in the interview, given to Press, and send the reports along with their statements, recorded by them.

15. At this stage, learned counsel for the petitioners would submit that Kattapanchayat is being held in every village and the villagers are compelled to prostrate before them and made to pay fine and, by way of

punishment, they are being ex-communicated, without knowing that those acts are prohibited under law. This submission has been endorsed by the other counsel as well.

16. Since this Court felt that there is lack of awareness among the public regarding the existence of the laws, prohibiting compulsory Kattapanchayat and giving punishments like imposing fine, excommunication etc., it thought it fit to issue a direction to the Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, so that suitable instructions could be given to the Legal Aid Committee under the Legal Services Authority of the respective Districts to make a propaganda in the Districts that convening Kattapanchayat is illegal and people should not be susceptible for the Kattapanchayats and if any person is aggrieved over that, he can approach Lok Adalats as well as the Legal Services Authority. Accordingly, Mr.Akbar Ali, Member Secretary was summoned and those directions were given. On the next hearing date, the Member Secretary would submit that steps have been taken, by giving suitable instructions to all the Legal Services Authorities of the Districts, to create awareness among the people to approach Taluk Legal Authorities in respect of the grievances, instead of approaching the Kattapanchayatdars.

17. Since both the parties agreed to take up the issue between the husband and wife before the Legal Servives Authority for conciliation regarding the matrimonial dispute and to solve the same between the parties, the Member Secretary was directed to summon both the husband and wife to get the matrimonial dispute solved.

18. As per the direction of this Court, the conciliation proceedings were held between the parties on 22.12.2003. The terms of compromise have been entered and accordingly, they have come to some terms and the said terms of compromise entered into between the wife and the husband have been filed. According to the terms of compromise dated 23 .12.2003, both agreed to get divorce by mutual consent and father agreed the children to be in the custody of the mother and father would pay monthly maintenance to the children and he would also agree for the other benefits to be given to the children.

19. In the meantime, the Advocate General filed an affidavit, sworn to by the Secretary to the Government, Public Department, along with the Annexure, containing the steps taken by the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, to prohibit Kattapanchayats. As per the affidavit, the Chief Secretary also sent a separate letter to all the Departments, stating that the Government Servants should not be allowed to involve themselves in Kattapanchayats and, in pursuance of the same, the Director General of Police also sent letters to the subordinate officers to take effective action against the Kattapanchayatdars, by registering an F.I.R. As per the affidavit of the Government dated 08.12.2003, a letter has been sent by the Government to the

Director General of Police, directing him to give suitable directions to the authorities concerned to take action against Kattapanchayatdars, by registering an FIR and in pursuance of the same, the Director General of Police also sent letters to the subordinate officers to take effective action against the Kattapanchayatdars, by registering an FIR. The Advocate General also would submit that besides the steps so far taken, the Government is ready to adhere to the other suggestions that can be given by this Court.

20. Miss Vaigai, Amicus Curiae, would submit that though in pursuance of the directions issued by this Court, the Secretary of the Public Department and the Director General of Police took effective steps trying to curb the illegality of Kattapanchayats, it should be ensured that the officers of the Police Department and Local Administration from the Panchayat to the District level should be sensitized about the illegality of Kattapanchayats. It is true that there are existing provisions in I.P.C. to take action against Kattapanchayats. But, it must be sensitized about the existing provisions in SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act,1989 and T.N. Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act, 1998. There must be declaration by the Government that excommunication would amount to violation of human rights guaranteed under Articles 21, 23 and 25. Since both the perpetrators and victims are ignorant of laws regarding Kattapanchayats, there must be publicity to be given to make people aware about their rights as well as the consequences of violations. The State Government can also be directed to provide assistance and facilities to the State Women's Commission, State Office of the National Commission for SC/ST, Chennai and Human Rights Commission. There can also be direction to evolve procedure for investigation of offences arising out of Kattapanchayats to be handled speedily and with protection to victims.

21. I have heard the counsel for the parties, the Advocate General and Miss Vaigai, Amicus Curiae and carefully considered the submissions.
22. The issue in this petition raised by the petitioners would relate to the grant of anticipatory bail. While considering the issue, this Court has to take up the other issue, which has become the main issue, with reference to the mushroom growth of Kattapanchayats, which are prevalent all over Tamil Nadu, posing a challenge to the law enforcing agencies.
23. When this Court has gone through the letters received from the public, nearing 1000 in number, would feel shocked that police agency is helpless and keeping quiet and the Kattapanchayatdars reign raised its ugly heads, controlling the entire area, as if they are the monarchs of the area, threatening even the educated people, who suffered at the hands of the so called Kattapanchayatdars, who were compelled not to go either to the police station or to the Court. It is clear from those letters that the law enforcing agencies, even though there are some provisions to indicate that the Kattapanchayat's imposition of fine and ex-communication are the offences, never cared to take action against the Kattapanchayatdars. This may be so, because the law enforcing agencies also may not be aware of the existing provisions of law.

24. In this context, on seeing this pitiable factual

situation, prevailing all over Tamil Nadu, this Court has to necessarily take up the issue relating to the suggestion or direction to be given to the Government, with regard to the steps to be taken by them to eradicate the evil of Kattapanchayats, either by issuing an Ordinance or by giving suitable directions, implementing the existing provisions of law.

25. Let us, at the outset, see the affidavit filed by Mr.Pitchandi, the Secretary, Public Department, who has sworn to an affidavit giving the details of the steps taken by the Government, in pursuance of the suggestions made to the Advocate General during the pendency of the application.

26. According to the Secretary to Government, Public Department, the matter, relating to the Ordinance to be issued to curb the obnoxious practice of imposing punishments by Kattapanchayatdars, was considered by the Government. After consideration, the Government desires to implement the existing provisions effectively, by giving suitable directions to the officials concerned. In response to the suggestion made to the Government through the Advocate General, the Government sent a letter to the Director General of Police on 25.11.2003, directing him to give suitable instructions to the authorities concerned to the effect that whenever persons affected by the punishments imposed by the local Panchayatdars prefer complaints, immediate action should be taken, by registering an FIR. The letter dated 25.11.2003 reads thus :
"CONFIDENTIAL PUBLIC (L&O-C)DEPARTMENT
SECRETARIAT, CHENNAI.9.

Letter No.7932/2003-3, dated 25.11.2003.

From
Thiru T.Pitchandi, I.A.S.,
Secretary to Government.

To
The Director General of Police,
Chennai.4.

All the District Collectors.

Sir,

I am to inform that reports have been received by the Government that punishments are awarded by the local panchayats ('Katta Panchayats') in certain areas violating the provisions of law. The affected persons are mostly women and people belonging to the lowest strata of society. Therefore, in such cases whenever complaints are made by the affected persons against imposition of punishments in such 'Katta Panchayats' and if such complaints disclosed commission of any offence, under the Law, action should be taken on the complaints under the provisions of law. I am, therefore, to request you kindly to issue suitable instructions to the authorities concerned to the effect that whenever persons affected by the punishments imposed by the

local panchayatdars prefer complaints and if such complaints disclosed commission of offences, action may be taken on the basis of the said complaints against the persons involved by registering F.I.R.

2.An action taken report may be sent to Government urgently.
Yours faithfully,
for Secretary to Government."

27. Besides this, on 02.12.2003, the Chief Secretary sent a letter to all the Departments bringing to the notice that Rule 20(1) of the Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct Rules warns the Government Servants to maintain absolute integrity and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of service" and further directed not to involve themselves in organising/convening/taking part in the Katta Panchayat and any violation of the instructions will be viewed seriously and disciplinary action would be taken. The letter dated 02.12.2003 reads thus :

"GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
Personnel and Administrative
Reforms (A) Department,
Secretariat,
Chennai-600 009.
LetterNo.53140/A/2003-1 dated 2.12.2003

From
Tmt.Lakshmi Pranesh, I.A.S.,
Chief Secretary to Government.

To
All Secretaries to Government,
Chennai-9.

All Departments of Secretariat, Chennai-9.
All Heads of Departments.
All District Collectors,
District Judges-and-District Judicial Magistrates.
The Registrar, High Court, Chennai-104.
The Registrar, Tamil Nadu
Administrative Tribunal,
Chennai-104.

The Secretary, Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission,
Chennai-2.

Sir,

Sub : Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1973 -
Prohibition of Government Servants from convening and

participating in "Katta Panchayats" - Instructions
Issued.

Rule 20 (1) of the Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct
Rules lays down that "every member of the service shall at all times maintain
absolute integrity and devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is
unbecoming of a member of service."
2.The "katta panchayat" has no legal sanctity and the
punishments imposed by it are not enforceable under Law. It is really a
challenge to the legally established courts. Conducting of katta panchayats
may sometimes result in violation of human rights which may result in
ill-treatment of people particularly in the lower strata of society. The
involvement of Government servants in such katta panchayats may embolden the
katta panchayats in imposing severe and corporal punishments on the victims.
In these circumstances, the involvement of Government servants in"katta
panchayats" has to be considered a violation of the above said rule 20 of the
Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct Rules.
3.The Government have, therefore, decided that the Government
servants should neither participate nor heed to the decision of the " katta
panchayats" and that suitable instructions be issued in this regard.
4.Accordingly, the Government direct that the Government
servants should not involve themselves in organising/convening/taking part in
the "katta panchayats". Any violation of this instruction should be viewed
seriously and necessary disciplinary action taken against the persons
concerned for such violation. The Government also direct that these
instructions should be brought to the notice of all the subordinate offices
functioning under the control of the Heads of Department and District
Collectors.

5. All the Departments of Secretariat are requested to issue
similar instructions to the Public Sector Undertakings/Boards/Corporations and
all other aided institutions under their administrative control for its strict
adherence.

Yours faithfully,
for Chief Secretary to Government."

28. In pursuance of the instructions given by the Government
dated 25.11.2003, the Director General of Police sent a letter dated
04.12.2003, to all the authorities concerned, which letter reads thus :

"Most Immediate/Personal Attention :-
Rc.No.257391/Cr.I (1) 2003.

Office of the Director General of Police,
Chennai-4.

Dated:- 04.12.2003.

CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM

SUB :- Crime-Punishments awarded by the local panchayats ("Katta Panchayats") in certain areas violating the provisions of law - Certain Instructions - Issued - Reg.

REF :- Government Letter No.7932/2003-3, Public(L&O.C.) Department, Dated:-25.11.2003.
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In the Government Letter cited, it has been informed that reports are being received by the Government that punishments are awarded by the local panchayats (Katta Panchayats) in certain areas violating the provisions of law. The affected persons are mostly women and people belonging to the lowest strata of society. Therefore, in such cases, whenever complaints are made by the affected persons against imposition of punishments in such "Katta Panchayats" and if such complaints disclosed commission of any offence, under the law, action should be taken on the complaints under the provisions of law.

2.Hence, all the Supdts. Of Police in Districts and Commrs. Of Police are, therefore, directed to give suitable instructions to all Subordinate Officers in their Districts/Cities during their Special Meetings to the effect that whenever persons affected by the punishments imposed by the local panchayatdars prefer complaints and if such complaints disclosed commission of offences, action should be taken immediately on the basis of the said complaints against the persons involved by registering F.I.R.
3.They are also directed to send an action taken report on the above subject to Chief Office before 15th of every month.
4.Receipt of this Circular Memorandum should be acknowledged at once.

Sd/-
Director-General of Police."

29. Mr.Pitchandi, Secretary to the Government filed an affidavit, enclosing annexure, showing the existing provisions available in I.P. C. to deal with various offences with regard to Kattapanchayats, quoting Sections 323,352,506,341,342,384,385,389,498-A,508 and 509 I.P.C.

30. By showing the details of the steps through the affidavits, letters, circulars and annexure and all, the Government, through the Advocate General, would state that it has understood the view of the Court and also the nature of prevalent evil practice and is ready to implement the existing provisions to curb the obnoxious evil of Kattapanchayats. The Advocate General would further submit that the Government is ready to consider

the other suggestions, that can be given by this Court.
31. Miss Vaigai, Amicus Curiae would submit that apart from the offences in Indian Penal Code, the other offences under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment on Women Act, 1998 also would get attracted and if the Government takes a view that no new Ordinance is necessary, the officials can be directed to take action under the I.P.C. as well as under the other Acts mentioned above. She would also submit that more often than not, persons associated with the Katta Panchayat are officials of the State/Local Administration/Police, etc. and they must be made aware of the existing provisions relating to that and a even private party cannot violate Articles 21, 23, 25 and all are bound by Article 51-A. She would also cite the following authorities:

1) 1992 (1) SCC 221 (RAJANGAM v. STATE OF TAMIL NADU);

2) 1994(6) SCC 260 (KHEDAT MAZOOR CHETNA SANGATH v. STATE OF M.P.);

3) 1995(1) SCC 14 (DELHI DOMESTIC WORKING WOMEN'S FORUM v. UNION OF INDIA);

4) 1995(3) SCC 743 (CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY v. STATE OF ASSAM);
5) 1998(1) SCC 1 (JOURNAL SECTION -VICTIMS OF CRIME);
6) 2001 (5) SCC 577 (CENTRE FOR ENQUIRY INTO HEALTH AND ALLIED THEMS (CEWAT) v. UNION OF INDIA);

7) 2002(3) SCC 31 (DEATH OF 25 CHAINED INMATES IN ASYLUM FIRE IN T.N., IN RE v. UNION OF INDIA);
8) 2002(7) SCC 39 (TARUN BORA v. STATE OF ASSAM);
9) 1997(6) SCC 241 (VISHAKA v. STATE OF RAJASTHAN),

to substantiate and also to necessitate this Court to give directions either to implement the existing provisions or to give a direction for issuing necessary Ordinance, to make the existing provisions still more effective, especially quoting 1997(6) SCC 241 (VISHAKA v. STATE OF RAJASTHAN).

32. On going through the affidavits, records and letters received from the public and on considering the submissions made by the counsel appearing before this Court, it is obvious that the first and foremost duty of the State Government is that the officials as well as the public shall be sensitized about the illegality of the Kattapanchayat system and also the availability of the provisions in the present law.
33. Many actions taken by the "Katta Panchayat" result in deprivation of social status, access to basic facilities like food, water and shelter, denial of cultural facilities like common worship, access to religious events, etc. and denial of economic opportunities like employment, finances, etc. As such, these would constitute violation of human rights guaranteed.
34. In this case, two ladies, namely, mother, who is working as a Headmistress in a School and daughter, who is working as a Senior Telecom

Office Assistant at Chennai, were summoned by the six Panchayatdars claiming themselves that they have got power to summon anybody in the village and to punish them and imposed a fine of Rs.50,000/- on the complainant and compelled them to prostrate before them repeatedly from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and only in the evening, the Panchayatdars decided to reduce the fine proportionately and calculated the reduced amount at Rs.19,058.75. In this case, the petitioners themselves would admit through their counsel that such things happen day in and day out, as routine incidents, not only in their village, but also in the surrounding villages.

35. It is evident from the perusal of the letters received from the public that this practice is prevalent in almost every village of Tamil Nadu. This would mean that the existing provisions are nothing but dead laws, which have not been given life. There is no answer as to why the officials concerned have not curtailed this inhuman practice, which is prevalent all these years, in spite of the prevalent statute preventing the same. Is it due to ignorance of law or due to inability to execute the law ?

36. The nauseating feature is that if the fine imposed by the Panchayatdars is not paid by the person concerned, that person's family will be completely ex-communicated and other villagers will be prevented from having any contact with the person concerned. Ultimately, the person concerned cannot get any help from other villagers. If anyone of the villagers contacts the said person, again fine will be imposed on the said villager. This practice is going on for a long number of years thinking that it cannot be prohibited by law.

37. There are Panchayat Boards, Panchayat Unions, Out-post Police Stations, Taluk Police Stations, Town Police Stations, there are Courts in every Taluk, but nobody tried to prevent this illegal practice. On the other hand, it is stated that in almost all the areas, even the officials in the local administration associate with the Katta Panchayat. It is also noticed that in almost all the areas, Kattapancyatats are going on. Even some of the officials in the local administration would be the members of the said Kattapanchayats. As a matter of fact, in this case, one of the Panchayatdars, namely, 8th petitioner, is the V.A.O.

38. Everybody would admit that the Katta Panchayat has no legal sanctity and punishments imposed by it are not enforceable under law. It is really a challenge to the law enforcing agency as well as to the legally established courts. Conducting Katta Panchayat would invariably result in violation of human rights and in ill-treatment on people, particularly in the lower strata of society. The minorities are afraid of the decision of the Panchayatdars, who belong to majority community. It is quite unfortunate to see that even the Government Servants are not aware of the existing provisions with regard to the Kattapanchayats. Indeed, the Government is constrained to inform them that involvement in Kattapanchayat has to be considered a violation of Rule 20 of the Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct Rules.

39. It is quite appreciable, that in response to the suggestion made by this Court to the Advocate General, the Government promptly issued circulars and letters, instructing that the Government Servants should neither

participate nor organize/convene Katta Panchayat and any violation of this instruction would be viewed seriously and disciplinary action would be taken against the person concerned for such violation. In response to the Government instructions, the Director General of Police also issued letters to the subordinate police officials, directing them to entertain the complaints made by the victim persons against the activities of Kattapanchayatdars, by registering an F. I.R.

40. Though there are some provisions in I.P.C. and other Acts, relating to prohibition of this compulsory panchayats, as pointed out by the Secretary to Government and Miss Vaiagai, one has to necessarily accept the sorry state of affairs, by which the existing provisions have become ineffective provisions, as they do not reach the persons concerned.

41. As a matter of fact, the circulars and letters referred to above were constrained to be issued by the Government for the first time, that too, on the suggestion given by this Court. But, even after issuance of the circulars, still, we notice the news in the newspapers that Kattapanchayat system is still going on. As rightly pointed out, there are some provisions and apart from that, steps have recently been taken by issuing letters and circulars, but the question remains to be considered is, whether it would solve the situation, relating to the evil of Kattapanchayat, which has assumed gigantic proportion. Of course, effective implementation of the existing provisions, to some extent, would solve the situation. The Government has also assured to implement the existing provisions. But, in my view, that would not be sufficient to solve the alarming situation, which is prevalent all over Tamil Nadu, projected through the number of letters received by this Court.

42. It is true that there are some I.P.C. offences which would deal with criminal intimidation and extortion. Some of the provisions in SC/ST Act and Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment on Women Act also would deal with such situation. But, SC/ST Act would provide relief only to certain group. Similarly, Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment on Women Act would only deal with the victims who are women. Sections 342, 384, 385 and 389 IPC also would deal with extortion in a general way.

43. Even though there are existing provisions in I.P.C., relating to corruption, there is a special enactment for prevention of corruption, namely, Prevention of Corruption Act. Similarly, special acts have been enacted like Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, Prevention of Exorbitant Interest Act, even though there are already existing provisions in I.P.C. The practice of Kattapanchayat, which is claimed to be prevalent for a long number of years, cannot be eradicated immediately through the existing provisions, which have not been implemented in a proper way.

44. Therefore, in my view, in order to completely eradicate this evil and make the public aware of the new legislation and the rights and duties of the people and the consequences of the Kattapanchayats, it would be advisable for the State to issue an Ordinance, with regard to this particular subject.

45. The Supreme Court, in various cases, including 1997 (6)

SCC 24 1 (VISHAKA v. STATE OF RAJASTHAN), indicated the necessity to give guidelines or directions to find out an effective alternative mechanism, in the absence of a legislation, to meet the urgent social need.

46. The Apex Court would specifically state that the Court would declare guidelines and norms to deal with a particular situation affecting the human rights. In this context, the relevant observation of the Supreme Court would be worthwhile to refer, which is as follows:

" Objectives of the Judiciary:

10. The objectives and functions of the Judiciary include the following:

(a) to ensure that all persons are able to live securely under the rule of law;
(b) to promote, within the proper limits of the judicial function, the observance and the attainment of human rights; and

(c) to administer the law impartially among persons and between persons and the State."

which states that those guidelines or norms are necessary, since the present penal laws do not adequately provide for specific protection and till the enactment of such a legislation is made, it would be advisable for giving guidelines to achieve the object, for eradicating the evil.

47. Having regard to the alarming situation, which is not controlled till now, it is proper for this Court to suggest to the Government that it would be advisable to issue an Ordinance, exclusively for eradicating the evil of Kattapanchayats. If such an Ordinance is issued, this Court sincerely feels that the implementation of the same would be easy for every Department and the people also would feel secured and further, the perpetrators also would not venture to continue the same, in view of the specific legislation. This Court is conscious of the fact that this may take some time since it involves lengthy process on the basis of the decision to be taken by the Government in pursuance of the suggestions made by the Court. Till such a legislation is brought, this Court is of the view that it would be desirable to give suggestions, to make effective implementation of the existing provisions, so that the evil of Katta panchayat would be curbed and controlled to a very great extent. The suggestions that this Court makes are as follows :

(i) The Government is directed to publicize the existing provisions of law as well as the letters issued by the Chief Secretary and the directions given by the Government to the police as well as to the executives and the Court's direction making the public know about their rights to approach the authorities against Katta Panchayat's punishment for taking action through the print media and Doordarshan and All India Radio apart from the District Administration efforts to create public awareness against the practice of

Katta Panchayat.

(ii) The Government can also provide assistance and facilities to the
(a) State Women's Commission
(b) State Office of the National Commission for SC/ST,
Chennai
(c) Human Rights Commission
to follow up the Government's directions as well as the Court's direction with regard to the complaints received against Katta Panchayat and to file a report and to take follow up actions.

(iii) The Government may conduct sensitization programmes for its officials at State/Local Administration levels/Police as well as Education Department.

(iv) The Government can evolve procedures for investigation of offences arising out of Katta Panchayat to be handled speedily and to protect the victims.

(v) The Legal Services Authority may also sensitize the public regarding the existence of enough laws by giving proper information and education both about the rights violations. They can also request the public not to go for Katta Panchayat for solving problems and they can be asked either to approach Legal Services Authority or other law enforcing agency.

48. Let us now come to the question relating to grant of relief sought for in this petition, namely, anticipatory bail.

49. As mentioned above, this Court directed the Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority to hold talks of mediation and conciliation between Rajendran, first petitioner/husband, and Tmt.Suganthi, de facto complainant, with regard to the matrimonial dispute and report the same after the settlement is arrived at between the parties. Accordingly, talks were held in the presence of Mr.Akbar Ali, Member Secretary. On mediation, the parties came for a settlement on some terms, which are agreed upon, regarding the matrimonial dispute. The terms of compromise were entered into between the husband and the wife, namely, Rajendran and Suganthi, and the same were signed by them, attested by the counsel for both parties. As the mediator, the Member Secretary also signed. The Member Secretary, as directed by this Court, filed a report before this Cou rt. The terms of compromise, as agreed upon by the parties concerned are as follows :

"1. Both the parties agree to get divorce by mutual consent.

2. Both parties agree to file a petition for divorce and cooperative with their counsel to file a petition before the Famil Court at Chennai.

3. The mother namely Smt.Suganthi shall have the custody of the children viz. Selvan Janeeswaran aged 10 years and Selvan Abishek aged 8 years.

4. The father shall pay monthly maintenance to the children in the following ways:
a) Rs.2000/- each to both the children by 10th of every month.
b) The above said monthly payment shall be made by way of debiting the amount in SB Account opened in the name of minors represented by the mother/guardian and the employer shall be directed to deduct the maintenance and the same be paid directly to the mother.
c) The maintenance of Rs.2000/- shall be increase by 30% after every 2 years and when the elder son enters into plus 1, the maintenance shall be enhanced to Rs.4000/-. When the children enter into any professional course, the father shall bear 50% of the total cost.

5. The father shall have the visitation rights as follows:
a) He shall visit the children on second Sunday of every month and the visiting period shall be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and if the particular second Sunday is not convenient for the children to spend a day with the father, an alternative Sunday shall be compensated.

b) He has the right to take his children to any public place like Park, beach, Zoo, or to a good restaurant of the children's liking.
c) Both the parties viz. the father and the mother should not speak ill about each other to the children. During the first few visits, the mother is directed to facilitate the meeting of the children with the father.
d) The first visit shall be on 11th of January 2004 and the father is entitled to visit the children on all the festivals, and give gifts, sweets etc. to the children.
6. The father shall make necessary entries in the service register so that both the children will get 50% of the terminal benefits.
7. Both Mr.Rajendran and Tmt.Suganthi shall have no claim from each other in any other aspects."

50. As requested by the parties concerned, the above terms of compromise are hereby recorded. In view of the above developments, which have taken place, there is no more hurdle to the grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioners. During the pendency of the matter, it was reported to the Court that in view of the registration of a case, Mr.Jayapal, 8th petitioner, who was working as the V.A.O. was suspended and a charge memo was issued by the Department concerned. Further, it is said that the first petitioner/ husband, who is working as an Assistant Executive Engineer at Neyveli, is also facing departmental proceedings. In view of the pendency of criminal investigation in this case as against the petitioners, the chance of promotion also has been denied to the first petitioner. As indicated above, first petitioner is husband, second petitioner is mother-in-law, petitioners 3 and 4 are brothers-in-law, petitioner 5 is a relative and all other petitioners are the local men. As already stated, 8th petitioner is working as V.A.O. and 9th petitioner is working as a Teacher.

51. Though there is no difficulty for this Court to grant anticipatory bail, the petitioners have to necessarily face the investigation process and also in the event of the charge sheet being filed, to face the trial, which would certainly take long number of years. Second petitioner, mother of the first petitioner, is an old lady, who recently had a heard attack, while pendency of the application before this Court. Therefore, this Court suggested to the counsel for the de facto complainant as to whether the de-facto complainant could go in for a settlement, even in respect of the criminal case, for which the counsel for the de facto complainant requested some time for talks. Accordingly, further talks were held in the presence of the Member Secretary. The de facto complainant would, ultimately, agree for withdrawal of the complaint only against the panchayatdars and she is not inclined to withdraw the case against her husband and in-laws, as she suffered very much at their hands.

52. When this was reported to this Court, the parties were directed to appear before this Court. When this Court asked her as to why she was reluctant to withdraw the complaint against her husband and in-laws, while she agreed for withdrawal against the panchayatdars, she stated that the jewels, which she brought at the time of marriage to the matrimonial home, were taken away by the husband, pledged the same and did not redeem and, therefore, she was not inclined to withdraw the complaint against her husband and other relatives. A further time was given to the parties to settle the matter on this issue. Ultimately, the husband/Rajendran agreed to give cash, worth of jewels, which were pledged. On that basis, both were directed to file a compromise memo. Accordingly, on 26.03.2004, they filed a compromise memo, agreeing for the withdrawal of the complaint, on the basis of some terms, the relevant portion of which is as follows :

"We further submit that as suggested by this Hon'ble Court, both of us agree to settle our disputes and first of us (Rajendran) today handed over two Demand Drafts of Rs.37,500/- each in the names of the two children, towards the value of 20 sovereign gold jewels of the intervenor at the rate of Rs.3,616/- per sovereign as on 15-3-1995. The second of us (Suganthi) agrees not to proceed further with the criminal complaint preferred by her with the respondent police on 11-8-200 3 in Crime No.7/2003 and the second of us will ensure that the criminal proceedings will come to close. The parties herein shall agree and abide by the terms mentioned in the affidavit, filed before this Court. We respectfully submit that neither of us have any claim against each other and all the disputes and issues between us have been full ly settled."

53. This joint affidavit has been filed on 26.03.2003 before this Court. On that day, Rajendran/first petitioner handed over two Demand Drafts worth Rs.37,500/- to the wife Suganthi. Suganthi, who is present before this Court, would undertake that she would give a written request to the respondent police, withdrawing the complaint against the petitioners. Accordingly, the matter was adjourned again to 05.04.2004, to enable the Government Advocate to get necessary instructions from the police, with reference to the withdrawal of the complaint and dropping up of further action.

54. When the matter was taken up on 05.04.2004, a memo was filed by the Government Advocate through one M.Vasantha, Inspector of Police, All Women Police Station, Musiri Taluk, Trichy District, to the effect that the respondent police received the withdrawal letter dated 27 .03.2004 and, in view of the same, a direction is sought for from this Court for dropping further action in the matter. As such, it is to be noted that the undertaking given by the de-facto complainant that she would withdraw the complaint has been complied with, by sending a withdrawal letter to the police on 27.03.2004. In view of the full and final settlement in regard to all the issues, which arise in this matter as narrated above, there is no necessity for the police to continue the investigation, as the de-facto complainant herself has reported to the police about the settlement and also made a request to withdraw the complaint. Therefore, it would be appropriate to permit the respondent police to drop the matter and send a final report, informing about the dropping of further action in the matter to the Court concerned, to enable the Court concerned to close the F.I.R. and it is, accordingly, ordered. It is pointed out that charge memo has been issued by the department concerned against the V.A.O., one of the petitioners herein, and he has been suspended. Hence, the respondent police are hereby directed

to send the intimation to the department concerned about the dropping of this case, so that the department will consider dropping of the departmental proceedings against him.

55. In view of the fact that the entire case is settled and further action is dropped, there is no need for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioners, as there is no apprehension of arrest.

56. Earlier, this Court directed the Principal District Judges of Sivaganga and Madurai Districts, to get a clarification statement from (i)K.R.Ramasamy, M.L.A. of Thiruvadanai Constituency, (ii) Periyakaruppan of Iravucheri, Devakottai Taluk of Sivaganga District and (iii) Tamilarasan of Dharmarajapuram Village, Madurai District, with reference to their statement before the Press, regarding the orders passed on Kattapanchayats by this Court. Accordingly, the Principal District Judges of Sivaganga and Madurai Districts both have sent reports, stating that the persons concerned expressed that they did not, in any manner, intend to interfere with the process of law in order to criticise the said system of Kattapanchayats and they have also tendered their apology and expressed their wholehearted regret if by in any manner their views meant disobedience or disrespect to the High Court. In view of the regret expressed by them before the Principal District Judges concerned, further action against them is unnecessary and the same is dropped.

57. Before parting with this case, this Court cannot but express its feelings of appreciation over the conduct and attitude of the parties, as well as the counsel appeared in this case.

58. Suganthi stands in the first place to be deserved full

appreciation from this Court. She suffered very much at the hands of her husband, in-laws and also felt traumatic experiences at the hands of the Kattapanchayatdars. The scar left in her heart, as she correctly stated, is unerasable. On one occasion, she represented to the Court that she even can pardon the Panchayatdars who made her to prostrate before them continuously for one day, but she would not pardon her husband and in-laws who tortured her so many years. Though initially she felt that at least her in-laws must be facing the trial before the Criminal Court, ultimately, she came down and expressed her willingness before this Court to withdraw the complaint against all the persons including her husband and in-laws. So, this Court is very happy to appreciate her quality of magnanimity, in pardoning the petitioners, at whose hands, she suffered very much, by withdrawing the complaint against them.

59. Secondly, this Court records its appreciation for the service rendered by Miss Vaigai, Amicus Curiae, who has collected the authorities and also gone through the various letters received by this Court and reporting about the Kattapanchayat incidents in all the areas in Tamil Nadu and also made pragmatic suggestions, for eradicating the evil of Kattapanchayats. This Court feels that she is entitled to some remuneration, for the service rendered by her. So, the Government is directed to pay a sum of Rs.10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only) to Miss Vaigai, Amicus Curiae. The Advocate General is directed to get a Demand Draft for the said sum of Rs.10,000/- and hand it over to Miss Vaigai.

60. This Court also would wholeheartedly praise the Advocate General, who effectively assisted this Court, by informing the Government, relating to the views of this Court and instructing the Government to take immediate action in this matter and also the promptness, with which steps have been taken by the Government, in pursuance of the Court's suggestion.

61. A special mention must be made about Ms.P.T.Asha, counsel for the petitioners, who argued the case so well not only as the counsel for the petitioners but also as an officer of the Court, who made her clients, the

petitioners to realise their mistakes and made them to return the fine amount, collected in the Kattapanchayat. In short, but for Ms.P.T.Asha, the matter would not have been settled so amicably.

62. Equally, M/s.Chandrakanthan and Srividya, counsel for the de facto complainant Suganthi, also deserve appreciation from this Court, who took pains to make the parties to arrive at a full and final settlement.

63. In regard to the matrimonial dispute, this Court originally asked Mr.Akbar Ali, Member-Secretary of the Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, Chennai, to summon both the parties and arrive at a settlement. Accordingly, settling the issues in respect of the matrimonial dispute, he arranged to obtain a joint affidavit from the parties concerned and file it before this Court. Further, in pursuance of the direction given by this Court, he arranged to send a circular, giving directions to the Legal Aid Committees under the State Legal Services Authority in all the Districts

of Tamil Nadu, to make a propaganda in the Districts, to create an awareness regarding the evil of "Katta Panchayat" and invite the people to settle the disputes through the Legal Services Authority and not to resort to "Katta Panchayat". For these acts, the Member-Secretary has to be highly commended.

64. Last, but not the least, the Government of Tamil Nadu deserves every appreciation for having shown the promptitude in issuing the letter from the Chief Secretary to the Police as well as to the other Departments and also the circulars being issued by the Director General of Police to all the Police Stations of entire Tamil Nadu.

65. It is remarkable to note, that because of these immediate steps taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu in response to the view of this Court, a good impact has been created in the minds of the public at large. However, as indicated above, these circulars would not suffice to cure the deeprooted disease. Ordinance alone would be the panacea. Hence, this Court sincerely hopes that the Government of Tamil Nadu will soon issue an Ordinance for eradication of "Katta Panchayats", so that the people of Tamil Nadu will be freed from the above said obnoxious evil. The Advocate General is directed to get a copy of this order and send the same to the head of the Government, with a covering letter, conveying the nature of this order, passed by this Court.

66. With the above observations, this Criminal Original Petition is disposed of.

Index: Yes
Internet: Yes

(mam/dixit/cs)

To

1. The State rep. By
the Sub-Inspector of Police,
All Women Police Station,
(Crime No.7 of 2003),
Musiri Taluk, Trichy District.

2. The Advocate General, High Court, Madras.

3. Ms.Vaigai, Amicus Curiae.

4. The Public Prosecutor, High Court, Madras.

5. The Director General of Police, Chennai.

6. The District Legal Services Authorities

of all the Districts in the State of
Tamil Nadu.

7. The Member-Secretary,
Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority,
High Court, Chennai-104.

8. The Chief Secretary to Government,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat,
Chennai-9.

(with a direction to issue copy
of this order to all the Secretaries to
Government, all the Departments of Secretariat,
All Heads of Department, All District Collectors)

9. The District Judge, Sivaganga District.

10. The District Judge, Madurai District.

11. The Secretary,Public Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-9.

12. The Secretary,
Personnel and Administrative Reforms (A) Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-9.

13. All the District Judges in the State of Tamil Nadu.

14. All the District Judicial Magistrates in the State of Tamil
Nadu.

15. The Registrar General, High Court, Madras.

16. The Sub-Assistant Registrar,
Criminal Section, High Court, Madras.

17. The Record Keeper, E.R. Section, High Court, Madras.

18. The Secretary, TNPSC,Omandurar Estate, Chennai.

19. The Inspector of Police,
All Women Police Station,
Musiri Taluk, Trichy.

20. The Chief Secretary to Government,
Union Territory of Pondicherry.

21. The Commissioner of Police, Chennai City.

(with a direction to issue the order copies
to all the Police Stations in the State of Tamil Nadu)

22. The Commissioners of Police of all the Districts of
Tamil Nadu.

23. The Superintendents of Police of all the Districts of
Tamil Nadu.

24. The Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai, Chennai

(with direction to issue the order copies to
all the Corporations / Municipalities /
Municipal Corporations / Panchayat Unions /
Panchayat Boards / Block Development Offices, in the State of Tamil Nadu)